

REMARKS

This communication is being filed in response to the final Office Action having a mailing date of December 5, 2005. Claims 1 and 8-9 are canceled herein without prejudice. With this response, claims 2-7 and 10-14 are pending in the application.

In the final Office Action, the Examiner allowed claims 11-14, for which the applicants thank the Examiner. The Examiner further indicated that claims 4-7 and 10 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form, for which the applicants also thank the Examiner.

Accordingly, claim 4 has been rewritten into independent form, with its base claim 1 now canceled. Newly independent claim 4 is now allowable. Dependent claims 2-3 are amended to change their dependency to newly independent claim 4.

Claim 10 has been rewritten into independent form, with its base claim 9 now canceled. Newly independent claim 10 is now allowable.

Various other amendments are made to the claims as shown to place such claims in better form. Moreover, claim 10 is amended to clarify that certain recitations contained therein do not fall within the scope of 35 U.S.C. § 112, sixth paragraph.

Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance: In the final Office Action, the Examiner provided a Statement of Reasons for Allowance. It is respectfully noted that the claims are also allowable based on other recitations contained therein (whether singly or in combination), alternatively or additionally to the reasons put forth by the Examiner.

Overall, none of the references singly or in any motivated combination disclose, teach, or suggest what is recited in the independent claims. Thus, given the above amendments and accompanying remarks, the independent claims are now in condition for allowance. The dependent claims that depend directly or indirectly on these independent claims are likewise allowable based on at least the same reasons and based on the recitations contained in each dependent claim.

If the undersigned attorney has overlooked a teaching in any of the cited references that is relevant to the allowability of the claims, the Examiner is requested to specifically point out where such teaching may be found. Further, if there are any informalities

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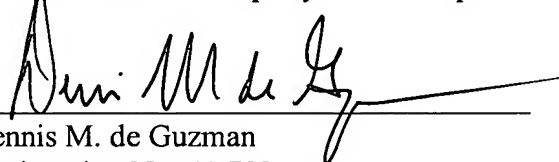
or questions that can be addressed via telephone, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney at (206) 622-4900.

The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

All of the claims remaining in the application are now clearly allowable. Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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